

Statement from Neal Keny-Guyer, Mercy Corps chief executive officer:

I understand you are working on a story about Tania Humphrey and Ellsworth Culver. How Mercy Corps responds to Ms. Humphrey today is of utmost importance to me, and I want to ensure that our organization's mission and values are at the forefront. In that regard, I hope you don't mind me reaching out to you directly.

The allegations made against Ellsworth Culver are horrific. Nothing like what Ms. Humphrey described as happening to her should ever happen to anyone, anywhere.

While the investigation in the early 1990s took place before I joined Mercy Corps, I believe that the Board took the allegations seriously and thoroughly investigated them. I am frustrated that records from that investigation no longer exist, but I firmly believe that survivors deserve the benefit of the doubt. That belief is shared by our Board today as well.

What is now clear to me is that when Ms. Humphrey reached out to Mercy Corps in 2018, she was seeking validation, justice and confidence that our organization has policies, practices and procedures in place to ensure accountability and protection for survivors. She should be commended for her courage in bringing these issues to us. I know that our staff took her concerns seriously, sought more information and offered to meet with her.

Despite those efforts, I am disappointed that we did not respond to her in a way that acknowledged the trauma shared by all survivors of abuse. We are deeply sorry for any pain Ms. Humphrey has endured. We are sorry if in any way - 25 years ago or more recently - we contributed to her pain.

While we have implemented strong global policies to ensure our team members, operations and programs do no harm to those with whom we work and respond in a survivor-centered way when issues do arise, we still have much to learn from this situation about how to be a stronger ally to survivors of abuse.

To start that process, I am requesting the Mercy Corps Board engage an independent, external review to evaluate how we responded when this matter was brought to our attention in 2018.

As we move forward, my expectations for Mercy Corps are clear: we will be accountable, transparent and committed to our mission and values in every aspect of our work. We will humbly acknowledge that we always need to do more, to be better. That begins with me and extends to each and every one of our team members. Thank you for shining a light on this issue, as painful as it is and will continue to be.